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VOID RIVALS
image
#16

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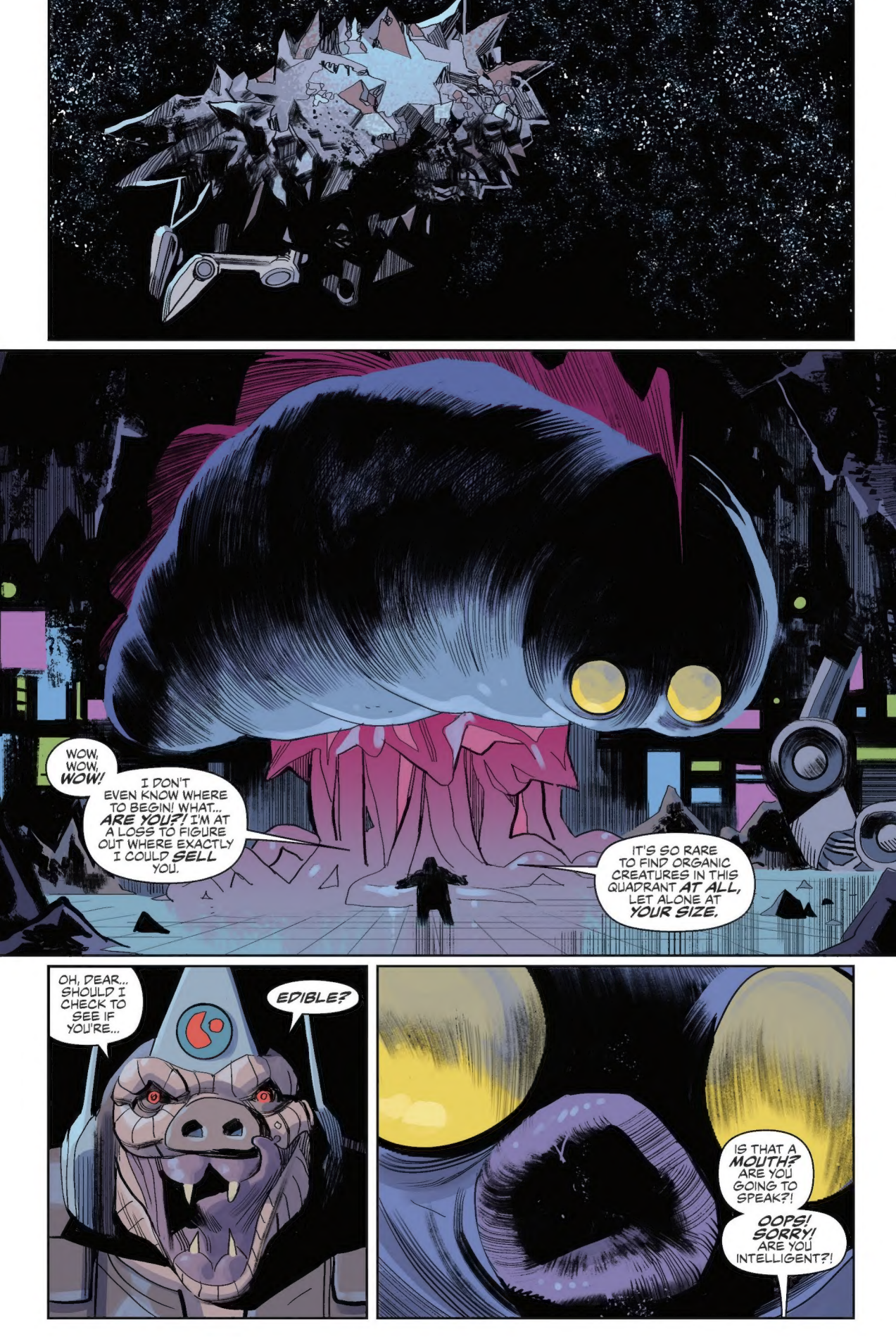

WOW, WOW, WOW!
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN! WHAT... ARE YOU?! I'M AT A LOSS TO FIGURE OUT WHERE EXACTLY I COULD SELL YOU.
IT'S SO RARE TO FIND ORGANIC CREATURES IN THIS QUADRANT AT ALL, LET ALONE AT YOUR SIZE.
OH, DEAR... SHOULD I CHECK TO SEE IF YOU'RE...
EDIBLE?
IS THAT A MOUTH? ARE YOU GOING TO SPEAK?!
OOPS! SORRY! ARE YOU INTELLIGENT?!

ROYAL GUARD-- ATTACK!

COBRA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA

VZAPP
THIS THING IS INFESTED!
VZAPP
AKRONUS-- END THIS CREATURE'S MISERABLE LIFE!
--THE HECK IS THAT?!
VZAPP
WHAT ARE YOU PEOPLE?!
SHAKK
WHERE IS ALL THIS AGGRESSION COMING FROM?! I'M JUST TRYING TO MAKE A LIVING!
VZAKKT
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU PIPSQUEAKS STAND A CHANCE, ANYWAY! LOOK!
AKRONUS!

TEND TO YOUR COMRADE. THIS ONE IS MINE!
LUCKY ME!
YOU'RE FAST--I'LL GIVE YOU THAT!
HIS ARMOR IS DYING!
HE'S NOT BREATHING!
FAST WILL ONLY SAVE YOU FOR SO LONG!
HA! HA! HA! HA!
VZAPP
VZAPP
YOU DO NOT KNOW THE POWER OF COBRA-LA!
BUT YOU SOON WILL!

SLASH
IT BURNS!
IS THAT ACID?! THIS WILL NEVER HEAL!
YOU HAVE LARGER CONCERNS!
THIS IS MY ROCKEROID!
THE VERY WALLS ARE MY ALLY!
WRAAAM
GETTING THE IDEA?
HA! HA! HA! HA!

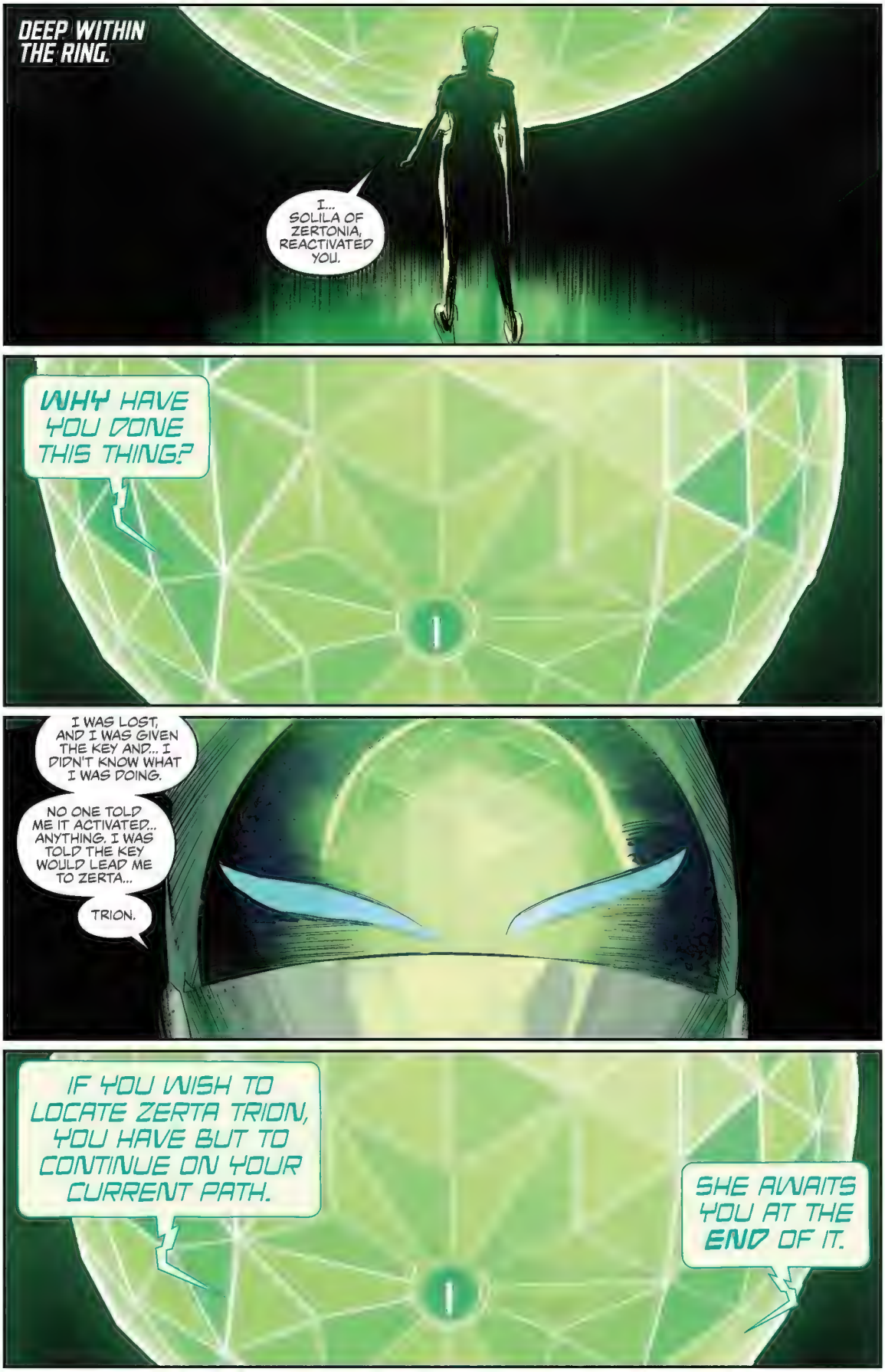
COBRA-LA-LA-LA
-LA
-LA
UH-OH.
SKRAKK
SKRAKK
VZAPP
VZAPP
WRAMM
YOU FEEBLE CREATURES CAN'T HURT ME!
CAN'T--

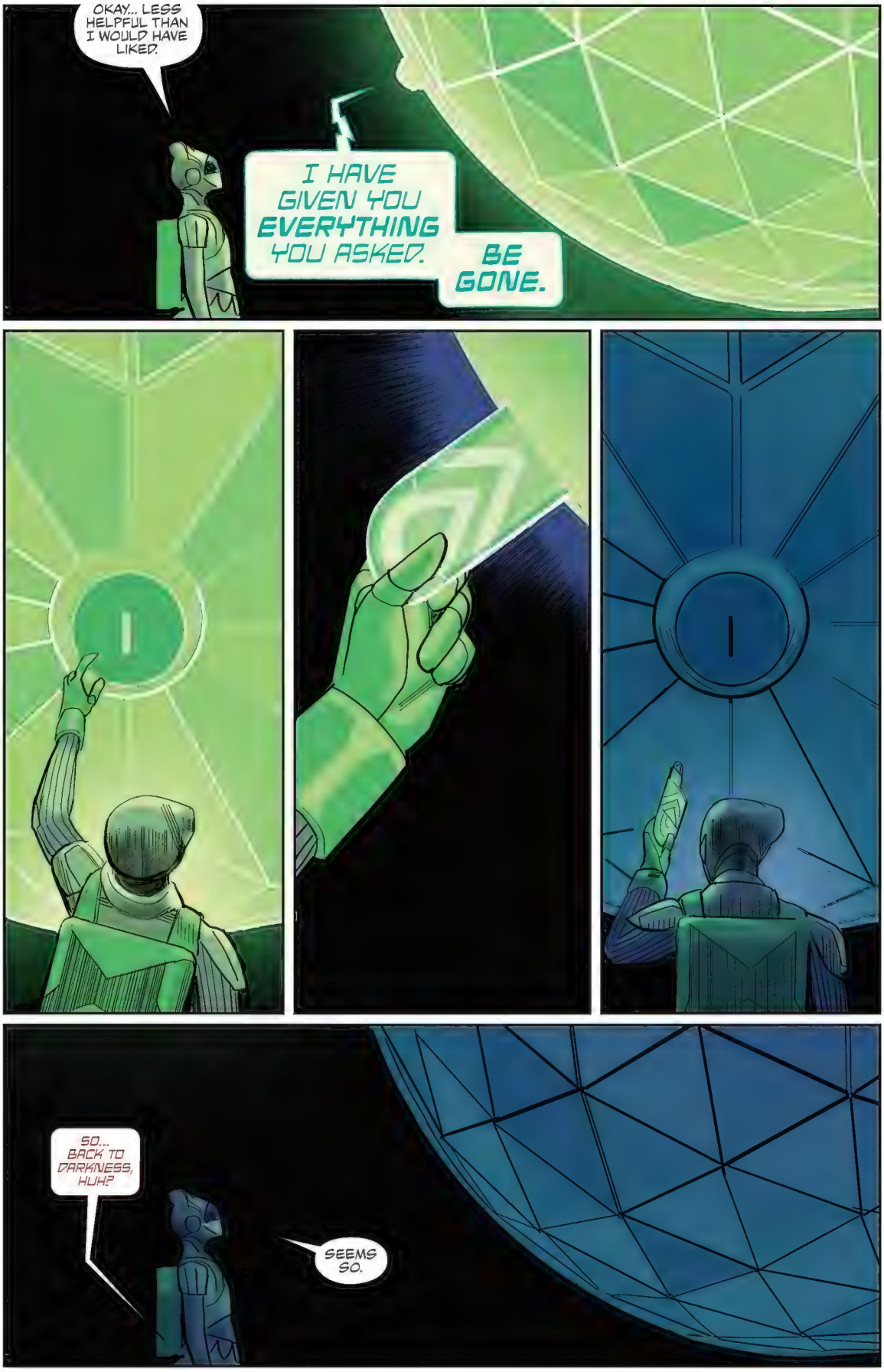
SLA

SLK

IT IS DONE.

EXCELLENT WORK, GRAKULA. AN IMPRESSIVE KILL.
A VICTORY NOT WITHOUT SACRIFICE.
AKRONUS'S ARMOR HAS DIED. WITHOUT IT, HE WILL NOT HEAL FROM HIS INJURIES.
I WILL STAY BY HIS SIDE. COMFORT HIM AS HE LEAVES THIS WORLD.
NO.
WE KNOW NOT WHAT OTHER DANGERS MAY YET LURK IN THIS METAL ABOMINATION.
WE MUST LEAVE AT ONCE.
THEN WE MUST TAKE HIM WITH US. HE MAY STILL RECOVER.
RECOVER? TO FREEZE TO DEATH IN THE COLD OF SPACE? OR BURN IN ITS RADIATION? WITHOUT HIS SECOND SKIN, HE HAS NO CHANCE.
IF YOU HAVE PITY FOR YOUR FALLEN BROTHER, SHOW MERCY AND END HIS LIFE.
BUT DO IT QUICKLY. I WILL NOT STAND ANOTHER MOMENT ON THIS INORGANIC SURFACE.


DEEP WITHIN THE RING.
I... SOLILA OF ZERTONIA, REACTIVATED YOU.
WHY HAVE YOU DONE THIS THING?
I WAS LOST, AND I WAS GIVEN THE KEY AND... I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING.
NO ONE TOLD ME IT ACTIVATED... ANYTHING. I WAS TOLD THE KEY WOULD LEAD ME TO ZERTA...
TRION.
IF YOU WISH TO LOCATE ZERTA TRION, YOU HAVE BUT TO CONTINUE ON YOUR CURRENT PATH.
SHE AWAITS YOU AT THE END OF IT.


OKAY... LESS HELPFUL THAN I WOULD HAVE LIKED.
I HAVE GIVEN YOU EVERYTHING YOU ASKED.
BE GONE.
SO... BACK TO DARKNESS, HUH?
SEEMS SO.

AGORRIA.
THIS ROOM IS SECURE. WE CAN SPEAK FREELY HERE.
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING WITH KANELA AND THE ZERTONIAN... WHAT'D THEY CALL THEMSELVES? UNIFIERS.
FAR LONGER THAN YOU. I DON'T APPRECIATE YOUR TONE, DARAK.
WITH THE DATA PACKET, I WAS ABLE TO REESTABLISH CONTACT, BUT ONLY TO SEND A BRIEF SIGNAL STATING AS MUCH.
I'VE BEEN FAR TOO BUSY.
SORRY FOR MY TONE. I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'VE BEEN WORKING WITH THE ZERTONIANS FOR SO LONG.
DOES IT SURPRISE YOU NOW THAT I KNOW THE TRUTH? KNOWING WHAT I KNOW... I'M ASTOUNDED THERE ARE SO FEW OF US WORKING TOWARD UNITY.
IT'S ABSURD THAT YOUR FATHER AND ZALILAK ARE MANIPULATING US INTO CONFLICT TO KEEP US APART.
I AGREE.
OKAY THEN.

WITH YOUR ACCESS TO YOUR FATHER... YOU'RE GOING TO BE *INVALUABLE* TO THE CAUSE. I TRULY FEEL LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO BRING US THE PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN SO FAR OUT OF OUR GRASP.
DON'T PUT TOO MUCH ON MY SHOULDERS. I'M A GREAT PILOT... AND GOOD AT *LITTLE* ELSE.
OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHY MY FATHER HATES ME?
DO NOT WORRY ABOUT YOUR FATHER. HE'S A RELIC OF AN ERA SOON TO PASS. THERE'S A BRIGHTER FUTURE AHEAD OF US.
I BELIEVE YOU'RE THAT FUTURE.
THERE YOU GO AGAIN.
LISTEN... ABOUT THIS UNITY...
YOU, KANELA, THE OTHERS... ARE YOU NOT AFRAID OF *GOLIANT?*
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS.

THE BLIND LEADING THE... MORE BLIND.
I WOULD EXPECT THIS FROM A COWARD LIKE DIRECTOR ELANDER, BUT MY OWN SON... A TRAITOR?
I DIDN'T THINK I'D LIVE TO EXPERIENCE SUCH SHAME.
SEIZE THEM.
BAD
BLOOD

WE'VE BEEN WALKING FOR A WHILE... AND THE KEY NO LONGER LIGHTS UP TO SHOW YOU'RE ON THE RIGHT PATH. I DON'T FEEL GOOD ABOUT THIS.
IS THIS NEW? YOU FEELING THINGS?
I'M PROGRAMED TO USE VERNACULAR THAT IS FAMILIAR. I AM CONCERNED. WE SEEM LOST.
I DETECT WE ARE WANDERING AIMLESSLY IN THE DARK. DO YOU AGREE?
IS THAT BETTER?
I COULD ALWAYS TAKE YOU OFF AND LEAVE YOU BEHIND.
WOULD THAT BE PREFERRED?
CERTAINLY NOT. AND I DON'T APPRECIATE THE THREAT.
WE JUST ENCOUNTERED AN ANCIENT SUPER COMPUTER. IT GAVE US A VAGUE DIRECTION AND WE TRIED IT. I'M ONLY SUGGESTING WE GO BACK TO IT.
IF I COULD INTERFACE WITH IT, MAYBE I COULD...
NO.
I AM A KEEPER OF THE LIGHT OF ZERTA, AND THIS IS MY TRIAL. I WAS PLACED ON THIS PATH AND WILL CONTINUE TO ITS END.
NO MATTER WHAT.

WRKK
WELL, THAT'S A PATH'S END IF I'VE EVER DETECTED ONE.
YOU HAVE NOT BEEN HELPFUL IN SOME TIME.
SORRY. SORRY.
MAPPING THE SURFACE, IT WOULD BE RELATIVELY EASY FOR YOU TO CLIMB ATOP THIS STRUCTURE, IF YOU WISHED TO CONTINUE FORWARD.
AAAAND YOU'RE ALREADY CLIMBING.
THIS FEELS LIKE THE TOP.
I WOULD SPECULATE SO, BASED ON MY READINGS.

DO YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF WHAT THIS STRUCTURE IS?
I DO NOT.
FROM HERE THE PATH WILL BE... MORE DIFFICULT.
THAT FEELS LIKE A GOOD THING. I SENSE WE ARE... CLOSER.
IF YOU SAY SO.
OKAY... I'VE DEFINITELY REACHED AN EDGE.
READY TO JUMP AGAIN?
CAN WE JUST... WAIT A MOMENT? PLEASE?

...
I--I--I--
STILL... FUNCTION.

TALK TO THE HANDROID

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO VOIDRIVALS@SKYBOUND.COM

Happy New Year, beloved readers! I hope you had a wonderful, safe end of 2024. Thank you for tuning in for another electrifying issue and I'll bet that teaser of Zerta Trion wasn't on your bingo card yet! Editor Ben Abernathy saying hello and joined, as always, by the legendary Robert Kirkman.

Man! Was this our most explosive issue yet? That fight scene with Pythona and the Royal Guard?! The death of SKUXXOID! (R.I.P. *sob*) and AT LONG LAST, Zerta Trion! So cool. Lorenzo and Patricio are just killing it on these pages. So dang cool!

I'm so excited for everyone to see what we have coming up in this series. I'm honestly having the time of my life writing this book and we're finally getting to some really cool twists, turns and lore that I've been dying to get to since the beginning. So stay tuned and get excited! (Or hopefully, stay excited!)

Now let's answer this mail!

. . . . . .

Dear Handroid,

So, I got into all things Transformers about 3 weeks ago, which for me meant getting my butt down to the comic store to stock up on EU trades and bingeing the 80s cartoon. I ended up reading all the EU stuff in about a day, and as I progressed through the cartoon I was thrilled to realize that Slizardo (!!) and Skuxxoid (!!!) were actually established characters.

Ha! I love that you thought they were original characters!

The love and respect that all of y'all have for the history of Transformers is palpable, which makes VR a beautiful addition to that history. This new corner of the universe is (literally, with Lorenzo and Patricio on the case) gorgeous, and I can't wait to see how it expands.

All that is to say--WHAT AN EXCELLENT SERIES!!!! I LOVED #14 and cheered out loud when Hot Rod showed up. I can't wait to see more of him next issue, and maybe even find out what the deal with Darak and Solila's mental connection is ..??? (Or just see more of Lorenzo and Patricio's art!)

Much love to everyone working hard to create the Energon Universe,

JG Piff

Binging the Energon Universe sounds like an amazing way to wrap up 2024, JG. Thanks for your support and writing in...and more to come on the mental connection between Darak and Solila...

More indeed!

. . . . . .

Void Rivals and the Energon Universe is great!

Void Rivals feels like it's set in Transforms season 3, while Transformers feels like the first two seasons. But they're happening at the same time! Which makes a lot more sense, actually

I've never actually followed a comic book series before. But now I'm hitting the local comic book store every Wednesday!

AWESOME! Thank you for your continued support--we won't let you down!

And honestly, this is the coolest possible thing to hear. We're so excited to hear about people

trying comics for the first time. Please, by all means, try some more!

I was always under the impression that comics had room to explore things that the TV shows and movies never had room for. But it feels like that may not be true. Things don't get as much space as I would like. And yet, each issue feels way too short. I just finished issue #14. Somehow I both feel like each section was too short, but also that we barely covered any ground.

I hear you on that. You'll probably find Daniel Warren Johnson's TRANSFORMERS to be a more dense read issue-to-issue. I try to keep my comics light and breezy which I can understand does tend to make things seem a little... truncated at times. Some issues are definitely more dense than others. I hopefully am striking a balance across all issues.

I wonder if Void Rivals is inspired by the episode "The Quintesson Journal"? There's certainly some similarities.

I see the similarities but they're really just a coincidence. That episode was not an inspiration.

The G.I. Joe comics I've enjoyed a little less. It feels like it's mostly just G.I. Joe being G.I. Joe, and the usually off screen MacGuffin happens to be Energon. Which might be great for some people, but I'm a Transformers fan and was never really into G.I. Joe. The Transformers aspect feels a lot closer to the foreground in Void Rivals, and more in the background in G.I. Joe, at least so far.

That's by design. It's important that all the Energon Universe books stand on their own. If G.I. JOE isn't your thing, we totally understand, but we would never want to do a G.I. JOE book that stands only on TRANSFORMERS references. The same way we hope VOID RIVALS and the story of the Zertonians and Agorrians is enough to keep you invested in this series long term.

One thing I don't think the Transformers comic does well is introduce new (to the comic) characters. For a lot of bots, it feels like it relies a lot on me already knowing who the characters are. Which mostly works because I do. But still, who are they in this version? I may never know, because so many get killed so quickly

Heh. We do be killing Transformers left and right.

G.I. Joe, despite having miniseries dedicated to different characters, is guilty of this a bit, too. But with that one, I mostly don't know who the characters are already

Honestly, man... you're just going to have to learn to love G.I. JOE! Try the regular series. It's like the best X-Men comic of the last 20 years! I love it!

I'd love to see the whole Energon Universe made into a TV series. It should just be "Energon Universe", have an hour long run time, and jump between the different factions. So, similar to how Game of Thrones worked.

Tim Ringenbach
St. Louis, MO

Totally fair that G.I. JOE isn't quite your cup of tea, Tim, but we'd like to think the Energon Universe has a little something for everyone...so thanks for sticking with us! And having an ENERGON HOUR TV series would be amazing... fingers crossed that Hasbro might see the value in that, too, haha.

Yeah, wouldn't THAT be the coolest thing ever! Fingers triple crossed.

. . . . . .

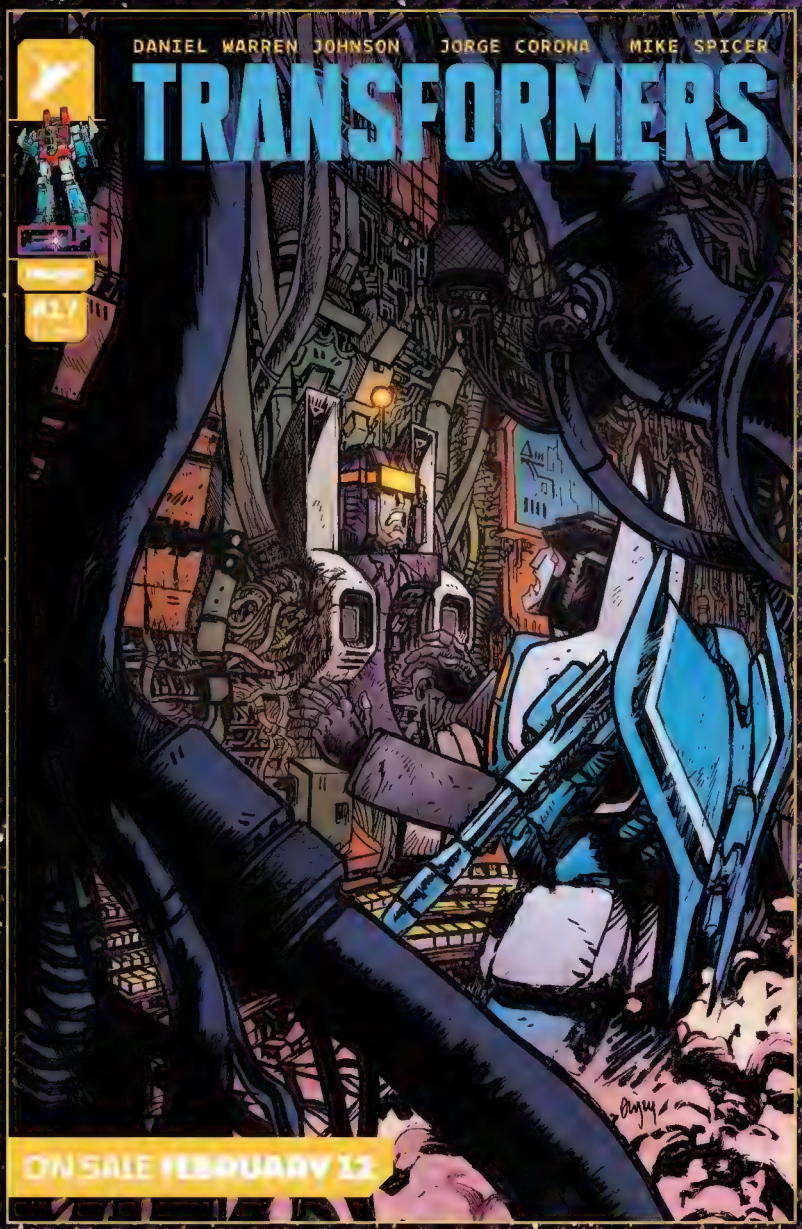
And on that note, it's time to prep this bad boy for the printer. Thank you all for you your continued support and please keep the letters coming in. We want to hear from you! Please be sure to pick up our additional Energon Universe offerings this month and as an added bonus check out the preview of Robert's new series with the incredible Ryan Ottley--BATTLE BEAST! It's coming in April and to call this book "epic" would be the understatement of the year...enjoy!

-Ben

See you all back here in 30 short days!

-Robert

EXPLORE THE ENERGON UNIVERSE



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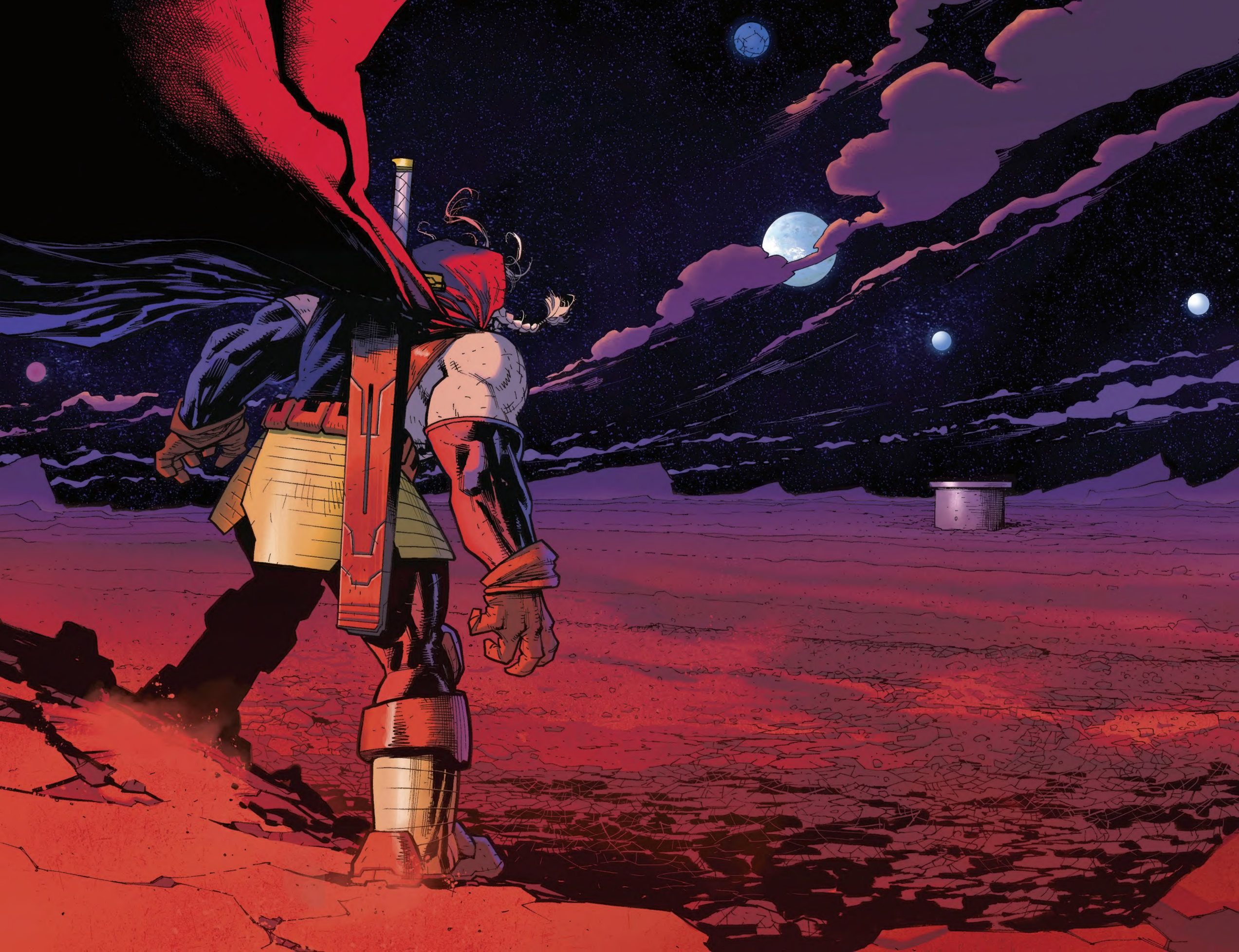

HMM.

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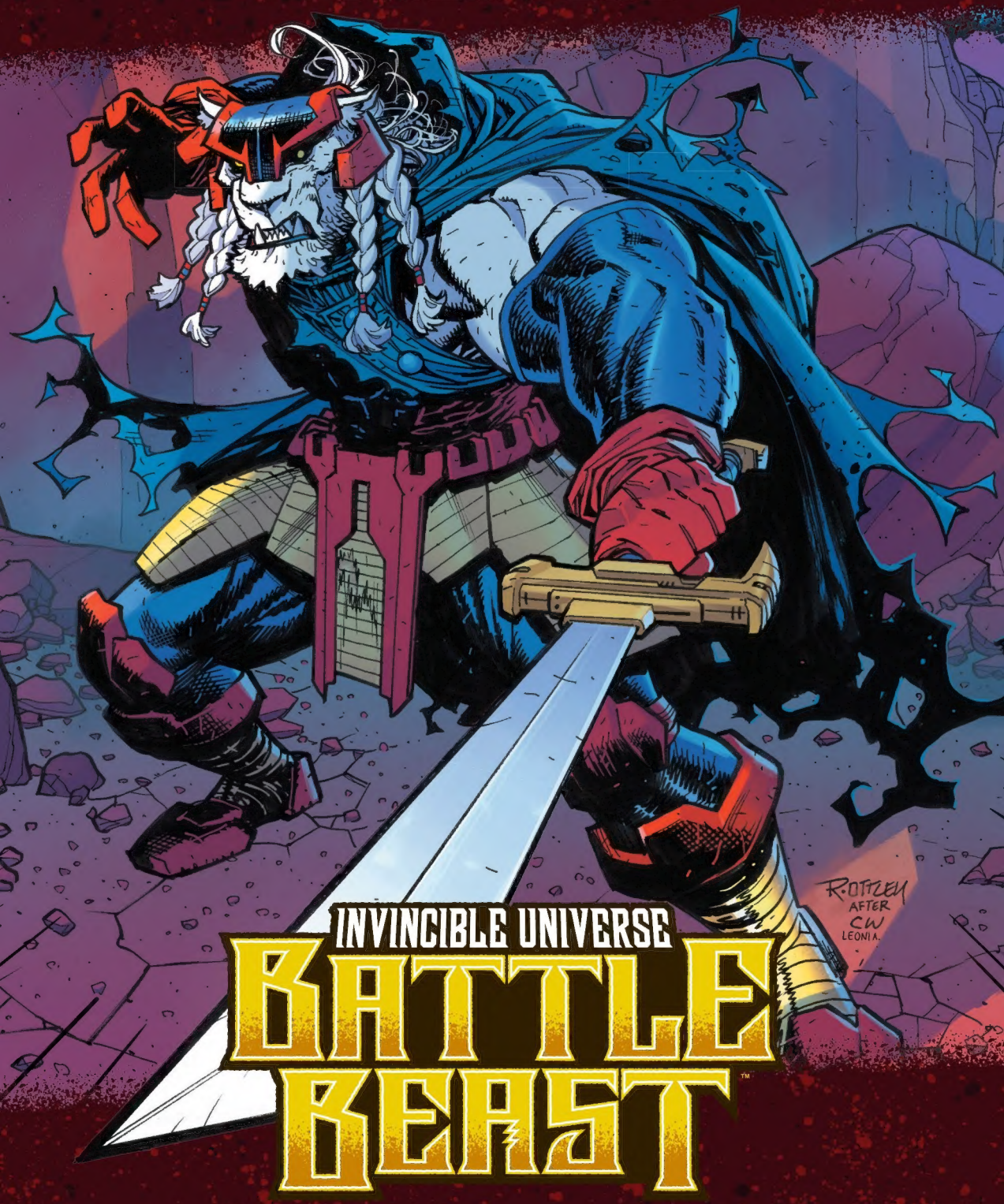

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